

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously presented) A lottery system utilizing an electronic mail, comprising:

storing means for storing information of customers;

means for limiting the customers stored in the storing means in advance so as to specify particular participants for a lottery;

means for uniquely allocating a reply electronic mail address to each of said specified participants, so that said reply electronic mail addresses are different from each other;

means for sending a first electronic mail to each of said participants, in which the reply electronic mail address is affixed as a unique access key to each of said participants;

means for recognizing an application for the lottery from each of said participants by receiving a second electronic mail sent back to said reply electronic mail address; and

means for notifying each one of said participants who sent back the second electronic mail to the reply electronic mail address of the result of said lottery.

2. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 1, wherein the result of said lottery is obtained by a drawing performed when the participant applies for said lottery.

3. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 1, wherein the result of said lottery is previously decided before said electronic mail is sent.

4. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 1, wherein recognition of the participant for said lottery is performed based on said reply electronic mail address of each of said participants.

5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 1, wherein the notifying means notifies the result of said lottery to each of the participants, by sending a third electronic mail in which a URL of a page informing of the result and an access keyword, are affixed, to each of the participants.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 6, wherein the URL of the page informing of said result is separated into one for a win of a prize and the other for a failure in winning the prize.

9. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 6, wherein by entering said access keyword and a destination electronic mail address to which the third electronic mail is sent, into the page informing of said result, the page for the win of the prize or the page of the failure in winning the prize can be accessed.

10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently amended) ~~The lottery system according to claim 10~~ A lottery system utilizing an electronic mail, comprising:

storing means for storing information of customers;

means for limiting the customers stored in the storing means in advance so as to specify particular participants for a lottery;

means for uniquely allocating a keyword to be entered in a page of a URL, to each of the participants so that the keywords are different from each other;

means for sending an electronic mail in which the keyword is affixed as a unique access key, to each of the participants;

means for recognizing an application from each of said participants when said participant accesses the page of said URL and enters the keyword; and

means for notifying each of said participants of the result of the lottery,

wherein the keyword is a destination mail address of said electronic mail.

12. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 1,

wherein data of said participants who applied for the lottery is collected and stored.

13. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 1,
wherein said lottery system is entirely incorporated into a computer system.

14-15. (Canceled)

16. (Previously presented) A method for conducting a lottery, comprising the steps of:

storing information of customers in a database;

limiting the customers stored in the database in advance so as to specify particular participants for a lottery;

allocating uniquely a reply electronic mail address to each of said specified participants so that the reply electronic mail addresses are different from each other;

sending by a host a first electronic mail in which the reply electronic mail address is affixed as a unique access key to each one of a plurality of said specified participants;

recognizing said specified participants for a lottery by receiving a second electronic mail sent back to said reply electronic mail address from each of said participants;

conducting said lottery; and

notifying each one of the participants who sent back the second electronic mail of their result of said lottery.

17. (Previously presented) A lottery system utilizing an electronic mail, comprising:

storing means for storing information of customers;

means for limiting the customers stored in the storing means in advance so as to specify particular participants for a lottery;

means for uniquely allocating a URL to each of said participants so that the URLs are different from each other;

means for sending an electronic mail in which the URL is affixed as a unique access key to each of the participants;

means for recognizing an application from each of the participants when the participant accesses a page of the URL and enters an electronic mail address of the participant; and

means for notifying each of said participants of the result of said lottery.

18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously presented) A lottery system utilizing an electronic mail, comprising:

storing means for storing information of customers;

means for limiting the customers stored in the storing means in advance so as to specify particular participants for a lottery;

means for providing at least one electronic mail address;

means for allocating uniquely the at least one electronic mail address to each one of the specified participants so that the electronic mail addresses are different from each other;

means for sending by a host a first electronic mail to each one of the specified participants, wherein the uniquely allocated at least one electronic mail address is affixed to the first electronic mail;

means for receiving a second electronic mail sent from each one of the specified participants to the uniquely allocated at least one electronic mail address, so as to recognize the participants;

means for conducting the lottery; and

means for notifying each one of the recognized participants who sent the second electronic mail, of a result of the lottery.

20. (Previously presented) A method for conducting a lottery, comprising the steps of:

storing information of customers in a database;

limiting the customers stored in the database in advance so as to specify particular participants for the lottery;

providing at least one electronic mail address;

allocating uniquely the at least one electronic mail address to each one of the specified participants so that the electronic mail addresses are different from each other;

sending by a host a first electronic mail to each one of the specified participants, wherein the uniquely allocated at least one electronic mail address is affixed to the first electronic mail;

receiving a second electronic mail sent from each one of the specified participants to the uniquely allocated at least one electronic mail address, so as to recognize the participants;

conducting the lottery; and

notifying each one of the recognized participants who sent the second electronic mail, of a result of the lottery.

21. (Previously presented) A lottery system utilizing an electronic mail comprising:

recording means for recording information concerning customers, each of which has an electronic mail address;

means for limiting the customers in advance so as to specify a main group for performing a lottery, said main group being defined by at least one of the customers;

means for issuing a unique access key to be affixed to said electronic mail address of each of said participants of said main group;

means for assigning said unique access key to said electronic mail address to generate a reply electronic mail address for the lottery after specifying said main group for the lottery;

means for recording said unique access key in association with said electronic mail address of each of said participants of said main group;

means for sending by a host a first electronic mail to said reply electronic mail address of each of said participants of said main group, in which said unique access key is affixed to said reply electronic mail address of each of said participants of said main group;

means for recognizing an application for the lottery from each of said participants by receiving a second electronic mail sent back to said reply electronic mail address;

means for distinguishing said access key with reference to said means for recording said unique access key;

means for conducting the lottery; and

means for notifying each one of said participants who sent back said second electronic mail to said reply electronic mail address, of the result of said lottery.

22. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 21, wherein a result of said lottery is obtained by a drawing performed when said participant applies for the lottery.

23. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 22, wherein said drawing is performed on the basis of the number of said participants of said main group.

24. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 22, wherein said means for conducting the lottery generates random number on the basis of the number of said participants of said main group, thereby obtaining the result of said lottery.

25. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 21, wherein said lottery system further comprising means for recording a result of the lottery; wherein the result of said lottery is previously decided on the basis of the number of said participants of said main group before sending said electronic mail, and wherein said means for conducting the lottery includes means for confirming said unique access key with reference to said means for recording the result of the lottery when receiving said second electronic mail.

26. (Previously presented) The lottery system according to claim 25, wherein said means for conducting the lottery generates random number on the basis of the number of said participants of said main group, thereby deciding the result of the lottery.